

The Biggest Mistakes that Teachers Make with Disruptive and Challenging Students

By Kevin Dill, Ed.S.

SNT Ed. Consulting, LLC

It only takes one challenging student and instantly our classrooms can turn into total chaos. Students who become angry, obnoxious, defiant, aggressive, controlling, arrogant, noisy, and oppositional can drive us to exhaustion, total confusion, and feelings of extreme frustration. As teachers, we simply want students to comply to our expectations and to comply with a happy and upbeat attitude! Instead, maladaptive students rarely comply and if they do, it's certainly not with a positive attitude.

I've taught challenging students with chronic disruptive behavior for years. As a teacher, I want behavioral strategies that are highly effective, yet easy to implement. I've struggled through the headaches and heartaches of trying to find which strategies will work to eliminate irresponsible behavior and improve responsible behavior. When you teach challenging students long enough, you eventually learn what works and what doesn't. To help other teachers, I put together a highly sought-after behavior training – **The Most Powerful Solutions to Eliminating Chronic Disruptive Behavior**- that teachers are rating as one of the best on behavior. Why? Because these strategies work!

During the training, I explain to teachers that getting into behavioral traps is one of the biggest mistakes that most adults make with students who are chronically disruptive. Believe me, I learned this the hard way!

Traps are blind spots to teachers. We can't see it when we're in a trap. The bad news is that traps can actually reinforce irresponsible behavior to occur again. That's why getting yourself into behavioral traps is one of the biggest mistakes that we make when dealing with challenging behavior. The good news is that we can learn and begin to understand traps so that we can recognize when a trap is coming and stay out of it, or get out of it, when we recognize that we're in a trap.

There are several traps to be aware of. The most common traps include the questioning trap, preaching trap, universal trap, and cure-all trap. There are other traps, but these are the most common among teachers who, unfortunately, get themselves into traps every day and don't even realize it.

Questioning Trap

Many teachers have been taught to question the student about his/her behavior. What are you supposed to be doing? Did you break these? Why are you licking the floor? Is that what 3rd graders are supposed to do with their tongues? During the behavior, don't ask a question. It's a trap. If you do ask a question, you will most likely get an answer that you don't like. So...don't ask. The student has decided to either meet your expectations or not. Period! No need to ask anything at that point.

Preaching Trap

Born out of frustration and exhaustion, many teachers fall into the preaching trap. This happens when a teacher preaches to a student about all (I mean ALL) of the irresponsible behavior that the student has emitted or all of the responsible behavior that the student hasn't. This is the preaching trap and not many people like it when they are preached to. Most often, a teacher will over-react to behavior and slip into the preaching trap by ranting and raving about how irresponsible the student is. Some even throw the guilt-trip on the student saying things like, "I don't get paid enough to work with students like you!"

Universal Trap

"Grow up and act like 10th graders!" When you hear teachers say something like this, they're in the universal trap. Well, how do students in the 10-grade act? My guess is that these students are acting fairly normal or close to what 10 graders typically act like. In this situation, the teacher is most likely irritated and has a very short fuse. Combine this with a lack of competence and skill related to managing behavior and *voilà* - you have an irritable teacher who lashes out toward the students getting into a trap.

Cure-All Trap

I visit many schools throughout the year to conduct training and coaching. Often, I'll be walking down the hallway or corridor of a school and hear something similar to this from a teacher in the classroom, "This is the second time that I've told you not to...if you do that again you're clip will be moved down to red"! This is the cure-all trap. Why, because if you're truly dealing with a chronically disruptive student, then they SHOULD NOT be on the clip or card flipping system. These don't work! Yet, many teachers keep using systems like these for maladaptive student thinking and believing it will cure all of their behavioral issues. We need strategies that are broader in scope and more intense. The clip system or card-turning system is not going to work! In fact, the typical behavioral strategies that teachers often use such as ignoring or moving down the clip or flipping the cards will work for neurotypically developing students, but not for maladaptive students. I was once working with a school that actually had teachers add the color orange to the bottom of their clip charts because they had so many students throughout the building who were getting their clips moved down to red within the first few hours of the school day. For some reason they thought adding another color would take care of it.

Staying out of traps is just one of the many strategies I cover during the behavior training. Understanding how to stay out of traps is a simple, yet effective strategy, that helps me when teaching students with disruptive behavior.

If you want to learn more of **The Most Powerful Strategies for Eliminating Chronic Disruptive Behavior** then check out my online training at our website www.showandtellconsulting.com. Simply go to the online training tab and register.

The training is in 10 easy bite-size sections. The training starts when you want it to start and ends when you are finished! It is a completely self-paced - you decide when you start and when you finish.

This training has been rated by teachers as one of the best trainings on behavior and is designed to provide you the most effective strategies for preventing and eliminating behavior in your school and classroom. You'll learn and leave with ready to use techniques for Angry, Obnoxious, Defiant, Explosive, Aggressive, Controlling, Arrogant, Noisy, Oppositional and Maladaptive students.

After enrolling, you'll have unlimited access to this course for as long as you like - across any and all devices you own. You can review any section of the course at any time, for as many times as you want. You'll also receive a certificate of completion indicating the amount of contact hours (5) that you have earned taking the online training.